



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE PREJUDICE AGAINST FOREIGN PHRASES.

It is difficult to see reason in the objections urged by many against the use of foreign phrases whenever it is possible to avoid them. The day of American indifference to things trans-atlantic is indeed gone by; nor is it probable that the extreme position of Mr. Bryant in excluding foreign phrases from the daily paper of which he was editor will ever again be taken by a man of his breadth of mind. The current is setting in another direction, and a due regard for other standards than our own in art, in politics, and in the amenities of life is replacing the disposition to ignore them. Yet that contempt for things foreign which reached its height some fifty years ago was too deeply rooted not to survive in certain modes of thought, and to this source it may not be altogether unreasonable to refer the dislike of foreign phrases. No doubt the abuse of classical quotations and French phrases by ornate writers has prejudiced many against even a moderate use of things good in themselves. Yet it is hard to see why a happy medium may not be struck between use and abuse.

The objection not infrequently made to foreign phrases on the ground that their introduction into an essay or novel presupposes more learning than most readers have, is of little weight. It is scarcely to the credit of an educated American that his habit of getting at the contents of a book in the shortest possible time will not permit him to puzzle out or inquire into the meaning of an expression he has never before encountered. True, the well known books of reference or the legendary lady from Philadelphia may not always be at hand. But we will estimate that nine-tenths of the quotations commonly made are from the French, German, and Latin, and that of these at least half are current coin. If such expressions as *fin-de-siècle*, *zeit-geist*, and *nil admirari* are stumbling-blocks to the reader, his acquaintance with general literature cannot be wide, and it is not for him to take exception to them. The Russian, German, or Frenchman who reads and thinks, as a matter of course understands more than one language, and is not worried by a citation from *Hamlet* or *Paradise Lost*. Keats did not deem it necessary to translate his refrain of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. Yet many excellent writers make a point of appending a translation to every quotation they make, and of course much depends upon the class of readers a book is intended to reach. But the practical American wishes to know why in nine cases out of ten anything more than the English rendering is needed. *Cui bono* is his motto—I crave his pardon for a phrase he would undoubtedly repudiate—and Emerson's theory that where a bridge has been provided it is hardly worth while to breast the current, has settled the question for more than one mind. But even a bridge has its limitations, of which the uncompromising notice, "No gait faster than a walk" is only the outward sign. Surely the mental and physical sensations experienced in walking or riding over—Wordsworth on Westminster Bridge to the contrary notwithstanding—are not comparable to those derived from swinging or sailing across. When Renan repeated to his sister a certain saying of Augustine, would she have been likely to seize upon it and make it her life-motto if he had only given her the French equivalent? Was it not precisely the untranslatable element in the words "*In angello cum libello*," simple to baldness as they seem, which explains their hold on her mind? In reply to the suggestion that in this case rhyme and symmetry of arrangement are the only untranslatable elements, I venture to assert that the same is true

in the majority of cases. In all languages under heaven sound is so interwoven with sense that the most powerful effects, whether in prose or poetry, may be very largely accounted for on the ground of a particular arrangement of vowels and consonants. In imaginative English the instinct of rhyme at the beginning of a word is only less active than in Anglo-Saxon verse, and though many have found it even more irritating than the recurrence of foreign phrases, I cannot help thinking that in our language, at any rate, a certain amount of alliteration, initial or terminal, is necessary to the immortality of a sentence. From "Little Latin and less Greek" or "Cleanliness is next to godliness" or "Spare at the bung and spend at the spigot," there is scarcely a current expression which does not bear out this theory; nor can we be sure that such sayings as "Beating round the bush," and "Telling a hawk from a hernshaw," would retain their homely force were it not for the single repetition of an unobtrusive consonant.

Perhaps if our schools paid more attention to the genius and less to the grammar of a language it would be easier to detect a practical value in the material accumulated by teachers and scholars. What our language has in common with Latin, what it has in common with German, what it has in common with French, ought to be pointed out to every student capable of appreciating the vital connection. I believe that the pronunciation of a language like the Italian, which has furnished our entire musical nomenclature, should be taught as a matter of course, even to pupils who have no intention of studying Italian. Indeed I think an approximate idea of the pronunciation of French, German, Spanish and Italian should be imparted to every young man or woman about to enter good society, and I am convinced that a system of education which aims at completeness should include a knowledge of all foreign words in general use.

The seek-no-further is a North American product, and that ought to endear it to every inhabitant of the New England and Middle States. Ought we then to banish the pineapple from our banquets?

LUCY C. BULL.

A NEEDED PROFESSION.

It is curious that the people of this great country should look calmly on, without raising a dissenting voice, and see their savings swept away from time to time, in consequence of the lack of a proper system of examining accounts.

Much has been said, if little has been written, on the subject of the incompetency of bank examiners. It is unfortunately true that men are frequently appointed as examiners through political influence—men who have absolutely no banking experience, no knowledge of figures, nor even the elementary principles of bookkeeping, and who scarcely know the debit from the credit side of a ledger. If incompetency were all that could be charged against examiners appointed under the present system, it might be bad enough, but it is on record that men of dissipated habits are sometimes selected, who are not only likely to neglect their duties, but are only too ready to make accommodating reports for a consideration.

As to railroads, it is a fact that a dozen or more American railroads are now in the hands of receivers, and it is fair to assume that if the audit of these corporations had been made by independent professional accountants, the causes of insolvency might have been avoided, or at least the state of bank-